



GREENWICH COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

NEXT PUBLIC MEETING

This will be held on **Wednesday, 9 December at the Greenwich Sailing Club at Manns Point, at 7.30 pm** and will include some Christmas nibbles and maybe a glass or two to celebrate the end of what we could all agree has been one heck of a year.

There will be updates on the controversial projects which were rolled out during the year, and discussion of further plans of action. Everyone is warmly invited to attend and join in the discussions.

A major part of those discussions will be Bob Campbell Oval, where to next? In recent submissions and petitions the community has shown itself to be deeply divided on this issue, with sadly some personal repercussions.

BOB CAMPBELL OVAL – DISAPPOINTMENT UPON DISAPPOINTMENT IN 2020

The Bob Campbell Oval (BCO) Master Plan story has been a defining chapter in Greenwich life and for all the wrong reasons.

After the shock of Council's decision to approve its St Leonards South re-zoning proposal in May this year, against the will of a large majority of the community who are fighting to keep what they see as devastatingly inappropriate overdevelopment at a minimum in our green and pleasant area, we had hoped that our Councillors would reject Council's BCO Plan to replace natural green grass with an unnatural synthetic sports ground.

Sadly, 4 of 7 of our Councillors elected to ignore the massive demonstration of community concern about the synthetic surface and voted, on 16 November, to approve a proposal that will turn our beautiful, flexible expanse of grassed open space into a jigsaw puzzle of facilities, juggled to fit around a fenced synthetic surface.

The development and approval of the BCO plan will be remembered as the low point in Council's "commitment

to community engagement", as it so proudly boasts in its newsletter.

Bob Campbell Oval is a cherished space. It is our only significant expanse of natural grass. It is surrounded by bushland and it adjoins the ecologically sensitive mudflats of Lane Cove River.

It has, until now, been a space shared harmoniously by community members for passive and active recreation.

It is extraordinary that Council did not recognise the importance of engaging its community from the outset in the development of plans for BCO, choosing, instead, to consult with just one stakeholder, the Greenwich Sports Club.

It was not until a GIPA (FOI) request secured the documentation relating to Council's grant for the BCO plan, that the rest of the community became aware of what was proposed for BCO.

It is little wonder that the community response was mainly that of incredulity, and their response was swift. Community members put their hearts and souls into the campaign to force a re-think on the synthetic surface.

Over 1600 Greenwich and wider Lane Cove residents signed a petition to retain the grass at BCO and over 200 objections were lodged before and during the consultation process.

For this reason, it is impossible to fathom how the report to Council for the November meeting concluded that **"overall the community is supportive of the proposed Master Plan to upgrade this reserve. While there is a section of**

the community that does not support the installation of the synthetic field, it is necessary to enable Council to provide a sports field that can accommodate the current and future demands for sports fields in the Lane Cove Local Government Area and Northern Sydney".

We cannot understand how Councillors could have:

- ignored the huge demonstration of community concern around the synthetic sports ground at BCO
- approved the BCO plan without any idea of its design detail, having passed a resolution that references an image that is barely a concept, let alone a detailed plan
- agreed to sign off on a proposal that has significant environmental impacts, without requiring in their resolution a full environmental impact statement (EIS) in advance of any further design development.

Prior to the debate on the BCO plan in Council, the Mayor moved an amendment, the intent of which is not entirely clear. However, it seems that Council may seek permission from the Department of Planning to commence the BCO works after the Greenwich Village Games in December 2021.

If approved, we hope that this delay will give Councillors a chance to have a serious re-think about whether the decision they made at the last meeting was the right one, particularly in terms of the lack of information available to them about the environmental impacts of a synthetic surface in such an ecologically sensitive location.

We hope, also, that the entry of **Friends of Sydney Harbour** late into the discussion may add weight, as they have raised significant concerns about the effects of material runoff from the synthetic turf into the harbour.

And, in the hope that our Councillors will reverse their BCO decision, we will continue to work to secure from the Minister for Planning agreement that the \$3.6 million grant approved for BCO can be applied to other projects that have widespread community support, not just the support of a single use stakeholder group that uses one part of the Reserve for part of each year.

GREENWICH HOSPITAL DEVELOPMENT GIVEN APPROVAL

Despite over a hundred objections from residents, the state's Independent Planning Commission (IPC) in September granted consent to plans for a multimillion-dollar redevelopment of Greenwich Hospital. It came to the Commission for determination because more than 50 'unique' public objections were received by the DPIE, as well as an objection from Lane Cove Council.

HammondCare had sought concept approval for a new 150-bed hospital building, respite care facility, two seniors living buildings and 329 car parking spaces on the 3.4-hectare River Road site. Under the proposal, all existing buildings would be demolished, except for the heritage-listed Pallister House.

The Commissioners met with the Department, Applicant and Lane Cove Council to discuss the proposed redevelopment and conducted an inspection of the site and surrounding area. They also hosted an electronic public meeting on 15 October 2020 to listen to the community's concerns.

The Commission considered the key issues relevant to the concept proposal, including site suitability, seniors living suitability, building envelopes and urban design, amenity impacts, transport, traffic and access, heritage and biodiversity impacts.

While the Commission agreed that the proposed integrated hospital and seniors living development was strategically justified and in the public interest, it has imposed conditions on the project which basically boil down to: reducing building heights and bulk and scale of the redevelopment; requiring the replacement of 86 trees earmarked for removal; and restricting occupancy of the seniors accommodation to seniors, people with a disability, people from their household, as well as staff of the facility.

The Commission's Statement of Reasons for Decision is available here:

<https://www.ipcn.nsw.gov.au/projects/2020/09/redevelopment-of-greenwich-hospital-ssd-8699>



Most of the existing buildings on the Greenwich Hospital site will be demolished to make way for the HammondCare campus.



An artist's impression of the proposed senior living units.

calm and patient with the range of views that projects could bring. Councillors allowed a minute's silence for Deb at their last meeting. (With thanks to the Mayoral minute for this information.)

Congratulations David Brooks-Horn... who has just tied the knot. We wish him well as he embarks on his new life path.

SANTA AT THE WHARF TO GO AHEAD

Hurray, Santa WILL be at Greenwich wharf at 8am on Christmas morning with presents for the children. As it must be a Covid safe event, and the elves haven't worked out yet how to apply the rules, they are asking everyone to please check notice boards in the village for details in a few weeks' time.



ARTS TRAIL SUCCESS

We can certainly be proud of our arts community here in Greenwich. At the recent arts trail there were many attendees from out of the area, as well as locals, and comments showed how well attendees regarded the quality and diversity of the art forms on exhibition. It was good to see that the cafes in the area recognised that culture vultures need sustenance as well and so supported the walkers with great coffee and snacks.

STAY IN TOUCH

It is now more important than ever to join the GCA and keep up to date with electronic postings. If you have IT skills we will welcome your help. Join our mailing list by emailing John Southwood at jsouthwood@spectrafin.com.au

Merry Christmas and heartfelt best wishes for a better 2021. It certainly couldn't be worse than 2020.

Merri Southwood,
President 0412 361 331

COUNCIL NEWS

Vale Deb Hutchens. We were saddened by the recent passing of Councillor Deborah Hutchens, who had served on Council since 2012, representing Central Ward.

Deb was Mayor from 2015 – 2017. During this period she was responsible for one of Council's most significant milestones – the signing of the contract to build The Canopy.

During her time on Council she was involved with a range of new initiatives including International Women's Day and Lane Cove Night Out events. She supported the Hold My Hand initiative and established the Lane Cove Festival by the River which is enjoyed by thousands of locals each November.

During the first Festival by the River, Deb opened the new Tambourine Bay Picnic Area on the foreshore which helped to provide an alternative use for the previous baths which had been closed.

Lane Cove was fortunate to have had Deb at the helm as both Councillor and as Mayor. She was always respectful,